

ASSOCIATED PRESS
8 July 1983

Tafoya Associates Detail Globe-Trotting Intrigue

SAN ANTONIO, Texas

Former CIA agent Edwin Wilson funneled money from Libyan officials to Eugene Tafoya for the 1980 shooting of a dissident Libyan student, according to testimony in Tafoya's income tax trial.

Tafoya, who was convicted of the shooting, and his wife, Betty Jo, are charged with underreporting their gross income on tax returns for 1980 and 1981.

The trial, which began Tuesday, recessed abruptly Thursday afternoon, prompting speculation that the government and defense might be negotiating a plea bargain.

U.S. District Judge D.W. Suttle imposed a gag order Thursday on all those involved with the case so court officials could not discuss whether any negotiations were taking place.

Suttle began allowing testimony about Tafoya's criminal past in the jury's presence Thursday, including a misdemeanor assault conviction for the 1980 shooting of a Libyan student in Fort Collins, Colo.

Alexander Raffio of London testified Thursday that Wilson demanded money from the Libyans to pay Tafoya's expenses for the Colorado shooting.

Raffio said he met several times with Wilson, who since has been convicted of smuggling explosives to Libya, to discuss large payments to Tafoya.

Raffio also said he angrily told Wilson he was "crazy to get involved with a person of that type," referring to Tafoya, after international publicity surrounding Tafoya and the Colorado shooting.

Tafoya, 49, has said the shooting of student Faisal Zagallai, who was shot twice in the head and lost an eye, was ordered by Libyan dictator Moammar Khadafy.

He also contends he was employed by the CIA, a claim the agency has denied repeatedly.

Former CIA agent John Howard Heath of Washington, testifying under immunity Thursday, said he obtained a visa for Tafoya to enter Libya and that Tafoya once asked him to obtain a silencer and mercury bullets for a gun.

"That's a weapon generally used by assassins," Heath said.

Tafoya later told Heath he "botched" the shooting in Colorado, Heath said.

He quoted Tafoya as saying: "I guess you heard what happened. I really blew it. I messed up the job."

Wilson paid Tafoya for carrying out the Colorado shooting, and it once was discussed in Mrs. Tafoya's presence, Heath said.

Tafoya was arrested in El Paso in January on a Canadian extradition warrant issued in connection with the 1979 firebombing of a car in Kitchener, Ontario.

He was free on appeal of his Colorado conviction at the time of the arrest.